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American Dramatists Series

Two Masques

America — The Women of Shakespeare

Julia Hall Bartholomew

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American Dramatists Series

TWO MASQUES

America—The Women of Shakespeare

BY

JULIA HALL BARTHOLOMEW

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AMERICA

CHARACTERS

COLUMBUS.
AMERICA.
FIRST CHORUS.
SECOND CHORUS.
THIRD CHORUS.
FOURTH CHORUS.
FIFTH CHORUS.
PROPHET.
FIVE GROUPS OF NATIONS.
SEVEN GROUPS OF DANCERS.

COSTUMES

COLUMBUS—*Italian, Fifteenth Century.*
AMERICA—*White, cap and gown.*
CHORUSES—*Red, caps and gowns.*
PROPHET—*Blue, cap and gown.*
GROUPS OF NATIONS—*National costumes.*
NYMPHS, INDIANS, FAIRIES, GIPSIES,
CLASSIC DANCERS, AND ORIENTAL DANCERS.

TWO MASQUES

AMERICA

A Masque

Columbus is seated at a table, on one side of the stage, where papers and charts are strewn about. He is deeply engaged in looking over these, studying and arranging for some minutes. Remaining seated he speaks.

COLUMBUS

A little lad in Genoa, I dreamed
Of distant shores; and most adventurous schemes,
As far across the luring sea I gazed,
Filled out the measure of my ardent dreams.

Outward and on my flying fancy sped
To overtake the sunset mysteries
Lost in the purple night. I yearned to sail
And seek a wondrous land beyond the seas.

(*He pauses and looks upward.*)

Has wild adventure so entranced my soul,
Imagination fired my brain to think
Of things impossible, that I am led
By idle dreaming to destruction's brink?

For still my vision paints a fair bright world,
Abundant, rich, and vast; and in my mind
The thrill for conquest stirs; my heart's elate
For exploration,—a great land to find.

(*Columbus rises, holding a paper in his hand; as he slowly walks about the stage he says*) :—

There must be land 'neath those far opal skies,
Isles Fortunate and Fields Elysian;
Storm-driven sailors oft have given report
Of a fair coast which their keen eyes did scan.

(*He pauses, and stands as if beholding a vision.*)

Mayhap there are in that dim-visioned land
Grottos and fountains where the nymphs do dwell;
In law and wisdom versed, Egeria
May hold a sylvan court and reign right well.

The floating clouds are like a fairy troop,
Enchanting all my powers; and my heart craves
To reach that far horizon in the west,
While dancing Scylla lures across the waves.

(*Columbus slowly approaches the table, and sits in reverie.*)

INTERLUDE—Dance of Nymphs.

(*Still seated, but looking toward the audience, Columbus says*) :—

COLUMBUS

A feast was held in that rare Golden Age,
When Saturn reigned in Sunny Italy,
Where master served the servant, and was proud
That each could serve with true equality.

Now to my vision there appears a world
Where social service rules and reigns for all,
And where good women rise and take their share;
Where peace and beauty answer spirits' call.

(*Rising quickly, and coming forward, Columbus continues*) :—

COLUMBUS

The vision beckons! I must venture forth!
I bow not at the shrine of Terminus;
It is not written in my destiny
Failure to know, and have high hope end thus.

A little lad in Genoa, I dreamed
Of distant shores, and now a man, I'll sail
Into the great unknown, to meet my dream
Beyond the seas. Pray God I do not fail.

(*Weird music is heard, at first very faint, when Columbus speaks of "the great unknown." As he ceases speaking it grows gradually louder. American Indians appear and dance. The music becomes riotous, gradually growing subdued, and faint as the dance ends and the Indians fade away.*)

(*America appears, carrying a wand. She calls upon the spirit of Columbus to witness what has come to pass.*)

AMERICA

Since time and space no limitations hold
For spirits who have conquered in the quest,
Behold from realms of beauty, light, and truth,
America—the proud, the golden West.

Things dreamers make live on, and in thy dreams
Thou mad'st a world more fine than one then known;
And yet, though great the vision was, perchance
America beyond all dreams has grown.

Behold a land thy soul must dearly prize,
And thy adventurous spirit must admire;
Wide-eyed with wonder at magnificence,
See now the goal to which her sons aspire.

The power of oceans' restless, surging tides
Has carried to these shores both men and things
Of worth and beauty. Races have found homes
Since hither they were urged by fancy's wings.

Now strong Atlantic weds the sea of Peace,
With vision and with purpose girded well.
It must not be that war shall henceforth mar
The land where all in brotherhood may dwell.

(*America pauses, and walks across the stage, meditating; the sound of footsteps is heard, as she be-*

gins to speak, accompanied by soft music, which grows more distinct and loud as she ceases speaking.)

AMERICA

Footsteps are heard of millions coming on,
And thrilling music falls upon the ear,
Sweet tones of joy, and peace, and promise fine
For all who in this presence do appear.

(*Columbus takes his place at the table, and remains seated while he views the pageant.*)

First Episode

(*America waves her wand. Enter Chorus, or Leader, who recites the following lines as the four groups of four enter in order as the nationality is mentioned. The groups take their places alternately at either side.*)

FIRST CHORUS

Here now advance the people whom thy dreams
Beheld; yet not methinks, of numbers great
As all the many millions in this land,
Thy wildest fancy ere did estimate.

(*Enter English Group.*)

FIRST CHORUS

From "merrie" England there came not a few;
And with them came the language of the land,

And laws, and customs good. May these fine sons
Ne'er fail to clasp Old England by the hand.

(*Enter Spanish Group.*)

FIRST CHORUS

From blue-skied Spain have come men brave and bold,
Keen set for thrilling deeds and acts bizarre,
Lured on the sunset path, to western shores
As by the gleam of scintillating star.

Across the southland rich they blazed the trail
From Eastern coast to California's sands;
And everywhere along the borderland
Are found romantic touches of their hands.

(*Enter Dutch Group.*)

The sturdy Dutchman also heard the call
Of vastness. They did seek the northern shore,
And planted there right worthy qualities;
Howbeit they held customs as of yore.

Strong folk, from vigorous clime, and dykes and floods,
In bonded groups they came, earl, churl, and thrall,
With spirits high, determination firm,
Jovial and joyous, yet right true withal.

(*Enter French Group.*)

FIRST CHORUS

With hope and buoyancy and graciousness,
Some bright adventurers did leave fair France

And found no cause to fault the ones who steered
Their wandering course, and did their minds entrance.

Things beautiful they brought, and helped to build
Fine towns and shaded avenues, where trees
Form rare green vistas, where the melody
Of bird-song blends in sweet tones with the breeze.

DANCE—Virginia Reel. By the Four Groups.

AMERICA

(*Addressing Columbus.*)

Now must thy heart with joyfulness o'erflow,
As thou beholdest these whom joy has filled,
And made their footsteps light and gay in dance,
To prove how hope and conquest have them thrilled.

(*America waves the wand as she speaks and the four groups pass from the stage.*)

SECOND EPISODE

(*Enter German Group.*)

SECOND CHORUS

Science must follow in the train, so long,
Of all the myriad things that men can do
And know. And out from Germany there came
A number great, who works of science knew.

Fine farms, and meadows, also, with the kine
Upon a thousand hills, where wealth abounds
In faithful tillage, German folk have held;
And cheered their toil with lusty vocal sounds.

(*Enter Irish Group.*)

SECOND CHORUS

Some of the freshness of the Emerald isle
Springs forth from every soul of Irish folk,
Genius inventive, quick surprising wit,
Humor for changing hours, and sparkling joke.

Weird things and fairies, coupled, too, with mirth,
And harps and songs, and things for making dreams,
The Irish brought. For many toils their worth
Is known; from dull hours their bright word redeems.

(*Enter Swiss Group.*)

SECOND CHORUS

The tiny tinkling bell among the Alps,
Sounds tender tones in calm cool evening hours;
And peasants gather, ere the night has fallen,
To breathe the fragrance of the grass and flowers.

From rich green glens and snow-tipped Alpine heights
Clear-eyed and healthful people here have come,
Right-minded in their thought of liberty,
And glad to make this favored land their home.

(*Enter Italian Group.*)

SECOND CHORUS

Italia has sent a glad, gay life,
And bright-eyed children gleeful, keen and strong,
Who make a joyous journey through the day
With winning charm of melody and song.

Some trace of their great ancient history
Clings to their garments, lingers in their hearts;
And if from Naples, Rome, or Sicily,
Or otherwhere they come, they bring their arts.

DANCE—Fairies Dance.

AMERICA

Blended in beauty, music, play and art
Are man's accomplishments, in this free land;
Here may each genius find a place to thrive,
Each individuality expand.

(*America waves the wand as she speaks and the four groups, followed by the fairies, leave the stage.*)

THIRD EPISODE

(*Enter Greek Group.*)

THIRD CHORUS

To human creatures there belongs the right
Of grace in every dwelling of the soul,
And on the head of Greece must rest the crown
Of conquest for the body, pure and whole.

Into America has found its way
The spirit fine of Greece, and Ganymede
Has coursed his way. The open field
Has conquered life, and taught the motor's speed.

(*Enter Russian Group.*)

THIRD CHORUS

Some types of ruggedness and virile strength
Must lend a character, and freely blend,
To make new nations great. From out the north
Have come men who combine for this good end.

Russians, from climes where cold winds harden man,
Bring vigor, health and strength as here they come
To have a part in this new continent,
And beautify the place they call their home.

(*Enter Persian Group.*)

THIRD CHORUS

With haughty mien and most deliberate air,
Long memories of nightingale and rose,
Perfume of attar, regal robes and ware,
Persians have come, with culture and repose.

Merchants have found the golden key which now
Unlocks the caskets of the treasure store
Of Persia's gems, embroideries, and rugs;
And books are written of their ancient lore.

(*Enter Group from India.*)

THIRD CHORUS

Ancient philosophy has slowly come
From India, the land of mystic lore;
Songs from these poets, these deep knowing ones,
Must surely charm this country more and more.

The land of marble mosques, and temples huge,
In grandeur wrought and carved and all inlaid
With rich mosaic forms, sends hitherward
Minds filled with beauty that these arts have made.

DANCE—Classic Dance.

AMERICA

Knowing the power of these historic lands,
The length of their existence, and their deeds
Of valor, faith, and might, it us behooves
To honor them and understand their creeds.

(*America waves the wand as she speaks and the four groups, followed by the dancers, leave the stage.*)

FOURTH EPISODE

(*Enter Syrian Group.*)

FOURTH CHORUS

It seems most fit this land should welcome those
Who once have trod the hills of Palestine,
Those hills so barren now, but which erstwhile
Were clad in beauty, and the valleys green.

To lead the nations to enduring peace
It needs must be the Prince of Peace is known,
And those who knew Him not in Syria,
In this land may be found among His own.

(*Enter Group from Egypt.*)

FOURTH CHORUS

Admixtures of the race on Egypt's soil,
From Galla, Nubia, and Kordofan,
Born in the ranks of servitude and toil,
Find here the equal rights of each free man.

Learned men have penetrated and disclosed
Things wonderful of history and art,
From times of Pharoahs and the Ptolomies,
Within old Egypt's sandy desert heart.

(*Enter Group from Arabia.*)

FOURTH CHORUS

The wandering Arab too has found the way
To these broad lands. Since Crusade times his power
In many forms has reached the eager West,
And answered questionings of students' hour.

With far keen vision Arabs know the way
Of stars; and nature's mysteries they seek.
From cities hidden in their desert sands
Knowledge may come of which they do not speak.

(*Enter Hungarian Group.*)

FOURTH CHORUS

Gipsies have wandered to and fro o'er Earth,
Telling the fortunes of the high and low,
Heedless of naught but mystery and mirth,
And ever skilled in music of the bow.

From Hungary have come these vagrant souls,
And many plodding working men, as well;
America has offered much to these,
A future bright their calendars foretell.

DANCE—Dance of the Gipsies.

AMERICA

The Maker of the universe has called
This land to honor and to faithfulness;
Sending and blending all these races here,
Where they in unity the World may bless.

(*America waves the wand as she speaks and the four groups, followed by the Gipsies, leave the stage.*)

FIFTH EPISODE

(*Enter Group from China.*)

FIFTH CHORUS

To seek Cathay was purposed in his mind
When brave Columbus sailed out to the West;
And now men from Cathay come to this land
To find a home and gain what makes life best.

An ancient people, peaceful, plodding, sure,
And versed in wisdom's lore; they also bring
A contribution worthy to endure,
And from endurance much of strength does spring.

(*Enter Group from Japan.*)

FIFTH CHORUS

Some subtle fascination lies within
The artizans and artists of Japan;
A charm and witching grace they oft possess,
E'en though 'tis by a tiny painted fan.

Beyond their sunrise land they've ventured out,
To offer in these marts their tempting ware;
They ask in progress and prosperity
To have an even chance, an equal share.

(*Enter First Group of Islands.*)

FIFTH CHORUS

When God had made the Earth and called it good,
There lay upon the water's smiling face
Some fragments from the land; and these were crowned
With beauty not excelled in any place.

(*Enter Second Group of Islands.*)

FIFTH CHORUS

Ships passing by the Islands in the seas
Have carried to America's expanse

The toiling peasant, and the dreamer, who
Had visions of a larger life perchance.

DANCE—Far Eastern Dancers.

AMERICA

Fine sons, fair daughters, from these races sprung
Join now in struggle for a nation's name,
For peace, and unity, and brotherhood,
That shall forevermore ensure fair fame.

These minds are deep and true, prepared to serve
Along the great highway of human life;
Humble in soul, and with a conscience clear,
Hearts yearn to heal the world at war and strife.

(*America waves the wand as she speaks and the four groups of four, followed by the dancers, leave the stage. America gradually approaches Columbus, who rises and speaks.*)

COLUMBUS

America, great things accomplished are,
And life is rich within thy borders fair;
What henceforth is thine aim, is't thy desire
To lead all lands to peace?

AMERICA

It is our prayer
And purpose to be true, to find the spring
Of fine enduring life, to reach a goal

Both high and far. Yet lure of gain is great,
And wealth ensnares.

COLUMBUS

Arise, and find thy soul
In service pure. The spirit called me forth
To find the wonders of far-famed Cathay,
And girdle all the earth with joy and truth
In gracious wealth of bloom.

AMERICA

Can we obey
That voice which called thee ages gone, and how
Shall we its whisperings hear when every ear
Is filled with commerce's din, when solitude
Is no man's guest?

COLUMBUS

Bend to the earth, and hear
The near sweet voice of duty, calling clear;
Then bid thy soul take cheer and mount on high;
For lowly listening tunes the thought aright,
And hearts with noble purpose serve and fly
Along the way of life.

AMERICA

The busy marts demand
Our lives' best hours. How then may we attain
The poise, the quiet power, the strength of will
That brings the best to body, soul and brain?

How sweep away wrong, suffering and sin,
How learn life's science true?

COLUMBUS

Art thou right sure
Thy aim is truly great, lurks there no taint
Of greed within thy mind? Is thy soul pure
Inflamed with brother-spirit, not with self?
The prophets have in ancient time well told,
To nations all unheeding of their voice,
"Destruction cometh when the aim is gold."
Now search the nation's soul and read her heart;
Gems may lie underneath the soil, unguessed;
This blended race may lead the hosts of earth
In all the ways of art, in beauty's quest,
Exuberant and free.

AMERICA

Can beauty's way
Uplift the land, can poetry and art
Fill needs of souls that grope for living light
Along life's thorn-edged path?

COLUMBUS

To every heart
These offer wholesome food. But there is balm
For wounds, found in a sure firm faith. The
names
I gave the lands I touched witness my zeal,
My bold adventure faith in God proclaims,
Faith was my guiding star, and by its gleam

I took my course across th' inviting seas
To reach great lands, for I was not content
To loiter in green isles of bliss and ease.
Make faith thy watchword now, and follow peace,
Then great shall be thy end.

AMERICA

Who shall us lead?
Are all the prophets gone, will none arise
To help us find our soul? We will take heed
If one there be to show us the bright way,
The sunlit path we seek.

COLUMBUS

Not one alone
There is to lead, but hosts if ye will list;
Yet not mid noise of battle are they known,
In gentle tones they speak, with voices mild.

AMERICA

By what names called are they?

COLUMBUS

Poet, and seer,
All who create, in drama, song, or speech,
Art, beauty, truth. Behold now comes one here.

(*Enter Prophet, who reads from a scroll as he walks about the stage, now addressing Columbus, and then America; at other times gazing far off into space.*)

PROPHET

America shall find her soul in deeds
Of service true; and unto lasting peace
Lead nations when at war. For this high end
Must be conserved her moral potencies;
It shall not come with idle hours and ease,
But nerve and strength, great tasks to undertake.
Unseen the universe of real things
The spirit's life must find. Self shall awake
To consciousness of brotherhood, and art,
And deep religious need, and drama's power,
To re-create the energies of man,
And crush war's spectacle, so grim and dour.

Ideals, like bright banners flung aloft,
Shall constitute the conquering sign. To raise
Each nation's life all nations must combine
And brotherhood of nations, for all days,
Keep reverence for man. Each patriot
Religion, too, shall feel. And ritual
Uplift where beauty can appeal to souls
Who sink and fall when sordid things enthrall.
From influence within and from without,
All wretched things that hurt and mar and stain,
The borders of this land shall guarded be,
By heart refined and elevated brain.

Equality in wisdom, worth and love,
Shall reign when men and women dwell in peace
And sympathy; and only then indeed
Shall beauty last, when women find release
From cloying things to seek a higher sphere,
And climb, with men, above the ways that hold

Their feet from energy and grace. Insight
For art and life shall then high dreams unfold.
Earth's craving soul shall so be satisfied,
Each land shall know of this great peaceful aim,
All nations' ills America shall cure
When churches, schools and homes this word proclaim.

AMERICA

Hinged now on keen expectancy, the door
Of opportunity stands open wide
For swift advance, along the great highways
Of truth, to all who firm and strong abide.

These races welded now in union sure
May herald forth the word of lasting peace,
Each seeing stars of guidance in the flag,
And bound in brotherhood that ne'er shall cease.

The pageant of the flag is free for all;
It must inspire, as when it floats afar
With music, art, and gladsome life, men shall
No longer crave the spectacle of war.

(*While America has been saying these words, the five Choruses, with their groups in order, have come upon the stage. Each Chorus carries an American flag of medium size, while every member of the group carries a smaller flag. When America ceases speaking the Star Spangled Banner is played. The Prophet drapes a large flag over America's shoulders, and all of the groups wave the flags.*)

Curtain

WOMEN OF SHAKESPEARE

SHAKESPEARE BEFORE QUEEN ELIZABETH AND HER COURT LADIES

CHORUSES PAGES

MUSIC—Midsummer Night's Dream.

COMEDY

TITANIA—FAIRIES—PUCK ..... A Midsummer Night's Dream
KATHERINE.....The Taming of the Shrew
MISTRESS FORD, SWEET ANNE PAGE..... The Merry Wives of Windsor
PRINCESS OF FRANCE AND ATTENDANTS.... Love's Labour's Lost
ROSELIND—CELIA—AUDREY—PHEBE ..... As You Like It
VIOLA—OLIVIA—MARIA.....Twelfth Night

Dance of Puck

ENGLISH HISTORY

QUEEN CONSTANCE, (ARTHUR), BLANCHE OF SPAIN.....King John
PRINCESS KATHARINE—ALICE.....Henry V
QUEEN MARGARET—JOAN OF ARC—ELEANOR DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER.....Henry VI
ELIZABETH (QUEEN OF EDWARD IV)—LITTLE PRINCES OF THE TOWER.....Richard III
QUEEN KATHARINE—ANNE BULLEN, AND LADIES-IN-WAITING .....Henry VIII

A Morris Dance

TRAGEDY

OPHELIA ..... Hamlet
JULIET—NURSE .....Romeo and Juliet
DESDEMONA—EMILIA .....Othello
GONERIL—REGAN—CORDELIA.....King Lear
LADY MACBETH ..... Macbeth

A Sword Dance

CLASSIC

CRESSIDA — HELEN — CASSANDRA—ANDROMACHE .....Troilus and Cressida
VOLUMNIA—VIRGILIA ..... Coriolanus
PORTIA—CALPURNIA .....Julius Caesar
CLEOPATRA—IRAS—CHARMIAN .....
Antony and Cleopatra

A Classic Dance

ROMANCE

ISABELLA.....Measure for Measure
PORTIA—NERISSA—JESSICA...Merchant of Venice
BEATRICE—HERO.....Much Ado About Nothing
IMOGEN ..... Cymbeline
HERMIONE—PERDITA.....The Winter's Tale
MIRANDA—ARIEL.....The Tempest

Dance of Ariel

The Dark Lady of the Sonnets

Dance of Puck and Fairies

Music—Midsummer Night's Dream

Curtain

(*Curtain rises. The queen is seated on the throne, with two court ladies standing on each side and one seated at the feet of the queen. A page stands on each side of the stage. Shakespeare enters from the left, advances a few steps and pauses. The queen signals to him to approach; he comes forward to within a few steps from the centre, and makes obeisance to the queen, who acknowledges his attitude. She makes a gesture permitting her attendants to be seated. They take their places, which are somewhat lower than that occupied by the queen. Shakespeare then speaks the prologue.*)

SHAKESPEARE

Most gracious Sovereign! May we entertain,
By pageant of the women of our brain,
Your Majesty; and so obtain your praise.
In realms of fancy we have spent our days
And many hours of night. Fitting it seems
The women of our visions and our dreams
At this time we should thus to you present,
That you may know our aim and our intent.

To cheer you first, we bring our Comedy;
Then History follows; then dire Tragedy.
Also we've roamed afar to Classic years;
There's Romance, too; and songs for mirth and tears.

So now, we beg our women may be seen
By thee, our honored and our gracious queen.

(*At the conclusion of the prologue Shakespeare bows and retreats, taking his place on a chair at the left.*)

Music—Midsummer Night's Dream.

(*Enter Comedy Group of women, from the right, led by Chorus, who recites the following lines as they pass slowly before the queen.*)

COMEDY CHORUS

Bringing wit and glee
Cometh Comedy.
All these ladies fair
Tread with sprightly air;
Their spirits are gay
For a mad-cap day,
When the merry mood
Has quickened the blood,
And lure of the shee
To the greenwood tree
And the fairy dance,
Each and all entrance.
Titania's grace
And Puck's jolly face;
The Paduan shrew;
Anne Page, sweet and true,
With gay Mistress Ford
And her saucy word;

There's love-time of May
For the Princess' day;
Rosalind's virtue,
Constant Celia too,
With Audrey we see
The rustic Phebe,
Viola, Duke's bride,
Olivia beside;
Maria the jade,
A fair saucy maid;

Drive all care away
And herald sweet May.
Mirth and Melody
Come with Comedy.

(*The Comedy Group pass from the stage at the left when the Chorus has ended speaking.*)

Dance of Puck

(*Enter History Group of women, from the right, led by Chorus, who recites the following lines as the women pass slowly before the queen.*)

HISTORY CHORUS

Now we present our queens and noble dames
Of History in your excellent land. The names
Well known,—Constance and (Arthur), Blanche of Spain;
Then Katharine, and Alice in her train;
Margaret d'Anjou, Joan La Pucelle brave,
(From such as Meg Jourdain we pray to save);

The Duchess uttering "dark shall be my light,"
Feeling a King's great power, her day was night;
With "lips like four red roses on a stalk"
Princes, quite innocent, to death did walk,
And Mother sad who saw "as in a map
The end of all." How quick the trap
Of fate is snapped on mortals frail
The drama finds a way to tell the tale.

Of women, in your honored Father's reign,
Who graced the court magnificent, we fain
Would bring them all. For beauty, grace and worth
We honor many names of noble birth
On History's roll. And ever proud we are
That women played their part in stately power.
Katharine, queen so "much too ventrous"
And Anne Bullen are picturesque to us.
Then learning found a place and liberty,
Reaching in your fair time great dignity.

And now we trust that you may "think ye see
The very persons of our noble story
As they were living: think you see them great;"
Queens and Court ladies in the hands of fate.
For so it seems. Now, we would have you know
Our reverence for your Grace before we go.
These queens and women have had joys and tears;
In warp and woof of History's woven years
The tapestry has colors dull and gay,
And thus is woven the texture of the Play.

(*When the Chorus has ended speaking the History Group pass from the stage at the left.*)

A Morris Dance

(Enter Tragedy Group of women from the right led by Chorus, who recites the following lines.)

TRAGEDY CHORUS

The poet oft must visit Helicon,
And walk in converse with Melpomené;
For never wins he higher in his art
Than when his thought is steeped in Tragedy.

Reminded are we that the Tragic muse
A woman was. The Drama needs must find
That fairest women's hearts are bruised and torn
And sorrow's burdens laid upon the mind.

Great women, chosen by destiny for pain,
And suffering trials oft that rend the heart,
Good women, falling victims of a plot,
Are found among the finest in our art.

Ophelia of "good beauties" and sad fate,
Well did she know "the poison of deep grief;"
The trials of Juliet, the Capulet,
In her fresh youth, are quite beyond belief.

When Desdemona followed leading-love,
Betrayed, by dark Othello's hand she died;
Emelia, when fortune turned against her,
I "play the swan and die in music," cried.

Grim the tale of Regan and Goneril;
Ingratitude, most heinous sin of sins,

And instigator of a hundred more,
They had for Lear. Sad death Cordelia wins.

In Lady Macbeth one must ever see
The darkest picture, drawn by any pen,
Of womankind. Ambition's voice she heard,
And the weird sisters on the marshy fen.

How often life has chained a woman's hands,
And fortune turned against her in the race;
But poet's thought can read a woman's mind,
And poet's power describe her rightful place.

(*When Tragedy Chorus has ceased speaking the group pass from the stage at the left.*)

A Sword Dance

(*Enter Classic Group from the right, led by Chorus, who recites the following lines.*)

CLASSIC CHORUS

Around the Mediterranean shores
Lie lands where Poetry and Art
Have ever dwelt.
The day's fair hours,
And misty purple twilights, stir
Within the mind a thousand dreams
Of beauteous things.
Fancy grows great
To cause return of Classic lore;
No poet fails to seek these shores
And bring to his own time some gems

To adorn his page.
In Classic garb
These stately women enter now;
Cresseda false, fairest in Troy
Save Helen, wed to Menelaus,
And in Troy fairest of the fair;
Frenzied Cassandra, and the wife
Of Hector bold.
Portia of Rome
A noble lady; Caesar's queen
Calpurnia; living in times
Of great imperial power and
Wealth at Court.
Volumnia brave
For Rome, and fearless, plead with power;
And, with Virgillia, met her life's
Last tragic hour.
In regal pomp
The Oriental tawny queen,
Iras and Charmian, her maids
And sharers in her destiny,
Do now appear.
High thoughts of art
Must come when classic times are seen
In picture and in play. Women
With charming grace of mind and mien
Dwelt then in palmy Greece and Rome
And by the perfumed Nile. And now
In drama we may view them here.

(*When the Classic Chorus has ceased speaking the Classic Group retires from the stage at the left.*)

Classic Dance

(*Enter Romantic Group, from the right, led by Chorus, who recites the following lines.*)

ROMANTIC CHORUS

The world of Fancy now must us engage,
While Terpsichoré and Erato dance
Before our minds, and lead us into fields
Where ever dwells the fine art of Romance.

Pleading a clemency for brother loved,
Sweet Isabella, in her suppliant mood,
By virtue won a Prince's heart, who knew
"The hand that made her fair had made her good."

At Belmont dwelt the noble Portia,
In knowledge skilled of a fair legal sort;
Nerissa, too, and gentle Jessica;—
Honored are women by their good report.

Of sprightly Beatrice, and Hero brave,
Upon a time there once was much ado;
But the wise friar planned with knowing skill;
The jealous lover found his Hero true.

These words came soothing sweet to Imogen,
When as Fidelio, she risked her life,
And her true love restored, he said to her,
"O Imogen, my queen, my life, my wife!"

Hermioné's heart a well of virtue was;
'Neath the soft skies of sunny Sicily,

Abused by perfidy, she bore her part;
And Perdita, her child, grew sweet as she.

The stormy sea to sweet Miranda brought
A lover true. The sprite worked mystery
And the droll creature dealt in many charms;
But in the end all safe reached Italy.

Among the women who adorn the page
Of drama, those who are of light Romance,
For charm, and grace, and wit, and poetry,
Are favorites in the world of play, perchance.

(*When the Romance Chorus has ceased speaking, the women of the group pass off the stage at the left.*)

Ariel Dances

The Dark Lady of the Sonnets Appears

SHAKESPEARE

(*Rises and recites these lines.*)

Now comes one here with dark mysterious eyes,
Who doth possess such beauty as I prize;
Her "black is fairest in my judgment's place,"
And "those two mourning eyes become her face."
Her "eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,"
"Have put on black and loving mourners be;"
And yet I fear 'tis not without disdain
She looks "with pretty ruth upon my pain."
Sweet are the visions that come to the mind
When dusky eyes are soft, serene and kind,

But bitter is the sharp and cruel dart
That may be hurled from them to pierce the heart.
Full oft within the dark mysterious eyes
Deep thoughts do lie that a sweet peace denies.
"Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
And then thou lov'st me,—for my name is Will."

(*The dark Lady of the Sonnets disappears; Shakespeare steps forward almost in the centre and recites the finale.*)

SHAKESPEARE

If we have wearied you we pardon crave;
Yet we do trust our women, fair and brave,
In gorgeous semblage here before your eyes,
Have won your high approval, and we prize
Your patient ear, and all attentive mind,
Queen of all queens, a ruler wise and kind.
Let dancing fairies come, cheer to impart,
Mid-summer-night's dream, and a quiet heart,
When all the women bid your Grace adieu
And this unworthy pageant pass from view.

(*Shakespeare makes an obeisance and retreats to the side of stage.*)

Dance of Puck and Fairies

(*Each group, led by Chorus, again appears in original order, passing in pageant before the queen. Shakespeare and Dark Lady follow the women.*)

Music—Midsummer Night's Dream.

Curtain

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Oct. 2009

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